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Titusville Amateur Radio Club

TARC NEWSLETTER

June 1990

COME TO FIELD DAY

by Ozzie – N4SCY – Field Day Chairman

Field Day is a number of things. Of course, it's the contest that the American Radio Relay League holds each year on the last full weekend of June. Of course it is a chance to show our operating skills to the public. And yes, it's a chance to figure out how we'd operate by dragging our radios to a disaster relief site if a hurricane blew through. But mostly, Field Day is one of the major social events of the Titusville Amateur Radio Club.

It's the one day we miss our Snowbird members the most, because it is one event they never get to participate in with us. While we will have most of our operating positions in the Press Box of the Draa Field stadium, there will also be an operating position on the ground with hurricane maps, ham radio brochures, and Red Cross disaster preparedness literature for the public.

In this year's Press Release sent to local media, the emphasis was on the role ham radio played in recent disasters, which the public may recall from news and TV reports. These reports showed ham radio's role in disaster communications during Hurricane Hugo, and the California earthquake. The press release mentioned that club members participated in radio operations during both. The public is expressly invited to our Field Day location to be shown how ham radio works in these situations. After all, they hear about it, they should know a little more about it, right? There is even the possibility that we may even get a little TV coverage this year.

While there is undoubtedly a team effort in getting together all the details of Field Day, what with antennas, radios, portable generators, and sundry equipment, Al WD4HIH will once again be the most important person on the Field Day team. Al will be

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Upcoming Events

> **<u>June 23–24.</u>– Field Day Exercise, 2 p.m. Saturday to 2 p.m. Sunday, Draa Field.**
> June 26, July 24 – next TARC meetings, 7 p.m., JayCees Building on Singleton Ave.
> Every Thursday night – TARC Friendship Net, 7 p.m., 146.91 MHz (–600).
> 3rd Saturday of each month – ARRL exams, 9:30 a.m. registration, FIT room Q22 in The Quad (under ham radio mast). For info call Bill Newkirk, WB9IVR, home phone 724–6183. Fees: Novice – free, all others – $4.95.
> **July 13 – Deadline** for articles to be included in the July edition of the *TARC Newsletter.*

Officers

President: Bob Nedimeyer W4VQB 269–1878
Vice Pres: Dick Duell W4LSD 269–1878
Secretary: Doug Reed N4QVY 268–1934
Treasurer: Clyde Lee K4EOS 267–9375

Minutes of the May 22 Meeting

The meeting was called to order at 7:11 P.M. by Dick, W9LSD, with the Pledge of Allegiance and a moment of silence.

Dick noted that Bob, W4VQB, was on vacation and that he would be acting in his absence.

Doug, N4QVY, read the previous month's minutes, which was accepted by those present. Clyde, K4EOS, gave the treasury report with petty cash of $24.36 and bank balance of $652.50. He noted that $96.80 had been paid out for repeater parts. The treasury report was also accepted by those present.

Guests introduced themselves: Glenn A. Lee, Chris Fair, Earl Jones, and Larry Carr. Members introduced themselves.

Les, K4SJC, gave the repeater report: crystals and elements had been ordered, and a G7–144 antenna to be used at the receiver site was expected to be purchased in the near future. Heliax hard line would be furnished at little to no cost to the club. Archie would make a bracket for the antenna mount. Pricing for a telephone link was checked out: $142 per month. Les felt that a 440 link would be a better choice. Les said that he would need some help in putting the system in place. The 440 transmitting subsystem would use a half watt transmitter into 9913 coax to a 5 element yagi up 50 feet pointing to the water tower. Wynn, WB4ZUY, is still working on the controller. Doug has ordered the manuals for the GE radios.

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269–2327

Back To The Future, Again
By Wynn Rostek – WB4ZUY

One of the things that hams are supposed to do is to help advance the state of the art. This usually means buying expensive new equipment. Really, how are you supposed to be state of the art without new toys, er, I mean new equipment (Honey, the federal government says I have to advance the state of the art, I've just got to have that new radio...)?

A few years back I was getting bored with CW. At that time AMTOR was an exotic mode, and it really sounded great. Error free transmission! I just had to get started with AMTOR, after all, it was obvious AMTOR was the future of radio communications, think about it, error free transmission. I just couldn't be left behind.

I bought a Kantronics UTU and wired it up to my Kenwood TS–520. I did manage to listen to a few stations, but I never made a contact. It was a real pain to get the radio adjusted, the UTU seemed to very prone to being overdriven. It was a problem to get the audio level from the Kenwood set to something the UTU could accept. I played around with the CW mode and it seemed even harder to get the audio level set for that. The box was even worse than I was at copying code.

About that time I decided to go back to college and my radio activities came to a sudden end. Of course all good things (HI HI) come to an end and I did eventually get out of school (no time off for good behavior). I bought a new HF rig, and started playing CW again. I even did a little voice (a rare occurrence for me) and worked a little DX.

Packet was now all the rage. Error free transmission, automatic forwarding, BBS's, networks, why anyone could see that packet was the future of radio. Of course I had to buy a TNC and the program that went with it. Just think of it, I could receive ARRL bulletins, RTTY, weather fax....

Right after Christmas I started setting up the station. That's when the problems started. The Nicad in my laptop decided to go flat. I took the battery pack apart and zapped the bad cell, no go. I was going to order a new cell, but of course it was an odd ball size. I tried to order a new battery pack from the manufacturer, but they were out of stock and back ordered a million years. I started the search for a pack.

After about a month I found someone who could build the battery pack. I got the computer going again, and the next problem showed up. The home brew 2 meter antenna I had built about 10 years ago had fallen apart. I bought a brand new Isopole and got that up one weekend.

Everything was finally set, I hooked it all up and fired up the station. The program I bought to talk to the TNC kept telling it couldn't establish communications with the TNC. Some days it would work and some days it just refused to work. I decided to write my own terminal program. Everything takes longer than it should, after about a month I had a really nice little interrupt driven terminal program.

I hooked everything up again and fired it all up. With a little luck I could connect to a local BBS or digi–peater. With 6 or 8 retrys I could even get a packet through. I was not impressed with the data rate packet exhibited. I did spend a few hours going over the adjustment procedure supplied with the TNC, and sometimes I could connect up fairly nicely, but other times I had a hard time connecting to the local machines. I knew I had that threshold knob setting off by just a hair, if I only could get it set 2 degrees lower....

Of course I had to buy a new laptop to use with packet because I was always using the other one at work. I also had to write a new terminal program because the new machine wouldn't work with the program I had written for the first machine, well you know how it goes.

The day I got my second terminal program written WB9MFJ managed to connect to me in spite of my best efforts to prevent it. We chatted for a bit and he gave me a few tips that N4SCY had probably given me the day before. (Which I had promptly forgotten.) While we were discussing the problems I was having he mentioned that I might have to turn the volume up on the radio. He claimed that it was almost impossible to overdrive the PK–232, so I turned the volume up. Suddenly I could connect to all the local machines on the first try. Packets usually went through without a single retry.

It was almost a religious experience. All of a sudden I was actually using packet. I set monitor to 6 and watched the traffic fly. There was a whole world out there waiting to be discovered. I connected up to a couple of BBS and started reading some of the messages and downloading some of the files. I started learning the little things to watch for, developed new operating techniques, in short it was an awful lot like being a novice all over again. It was a very heady two hours.

Last night on one of the local BBS's I saw a message about TNC mods that allowed you to run 9600 baud, it sounded fascinating. Of course I'd have to buy a new TNC, I wouldn't want to take a chance on ruining the machine I depend on every day (Oh honey, did you know that with the right equipment I could...).

To be continued???

The Editor's Desk by Doug Reed – N4QVY

Field Day is here once again. Due to studying for 13 wpm over the past couple of months, I haven't watched the calender. If I had, I would have sent this out a week early so that everyone would have a little more time to prepare. Even so, I feel relatively sure who we'll have down at Draa Field as ops. I'd really like to see a couple of new faces this year in the booth. It really *is* a lot of fun and you won't be sorry you helped out.

By the way, I DID pass the 13 wpm exam down in Melbourne last weekend. There were only four people taking code exams, two for 13, and two for 5. Bill Newkirk, WB9IVR, asked that I run a packet request for VEs, and such is on page 2. If you have an advanced or extra ticket, then you have the basic qualifications. Contact the VEC of your

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Minutes...
A motion was made and carried to reimburse Wynn for a repeater manual if still available.

Ozzie said that the packet display at Miracle City Mall's computer show went OK.

New Business –

Field Day: Ozzie mentioned that Field Day would be June 23 and 24. Classification may be 5A this year (Wayne, KB4YLY, mentioned something about 20A). A call had not been selected but may be Lee (in Rockledge), KK4EY. Vern, KB4RBU, volunteered his call as well. It was agreed to let Ozzie decide. Members were asked to bring coax. Antenna assembly would begin at 8 A.M. Bud, K4CWG, made a motion to reimburse field day expenses as needed. This was seconded and carried. Dick said that he would go over to Dennis's, N4SDI, house to pick up the antennas and check them out.

Vern mentioned that he may have some scrap material for the antenna mounting bracket for the repeater site. Archie said that he would get the dimensions of the tower and would contact him.

Les made a motion to spend up to $175 for the antenna and brackets for the receiving antenna. This was seconded and carried.

Lloyd, KA4LTK, attempted to stir the pot by submitting Bud's call as the Field Day call. Bud said no way Lloyd.

Respectfully, Doug Reed, Secretary

PROPAGATION FORECAST BULLETIN 24 ARLP024
FROM ED TILTON, W1HDQ SPRING HILL FL
JUNE 11, 1990 TO ALL RADIO AMATEURS

At about one third of the month of June, the solar flux is rising daily, but not as rapidly as in the same period in May. Daily visual observation of the sun has brought essentially the same results. Sunspot numbers are much lower than they were a year or more ago.

On June 15, 1989, the solar flux reached 327. The June low was 192, and the flux averaged 240 that month. Nothing like these figures appears in the 1990 record so far. May peaked at 268, and averaged just over 180, the best record in this year so far. June is off to a slower start, but that may not be important at this time of year, when sporadic E skip is at its peak in the northern hemisphere.

For newcomers, sporadic E tends to dominate propagation on 28 and 50 MHz in early summer. It usually becomes rare after late July, though it may last througm early August, some years. Signals are very strong at times, but fading is often severe. E skip may show up on 144 Mhz, but it is likely to be very erratic and short lived at this high frequency.

American sunspot numbers for May 31 through June 6 were between 70 and 105 with a mean of 86.7.

HR AMSAT NEWS SERVICE BULLETIN 160.01
FROM AMSAT HQ SILVER SPRING, MD
JUNE 9, 1990 TO ALL RADIO AMATEURS BT

STS-35/SAREX Mission Delayed Possibly for Two Months

This week NASA engineers and technicians found the hydrogen leak which prevent- ed the lift-off of the shuttle Columbia (STS-35) on May 29th. Because of the danger of an explosion from a hydrogen leak in the engine compartment, NASA officials scrubbed the launch and worked up a plan to find it. The leak was located between two plates that connect the shuttle and the external tank. Since this is considered a major repair and one that can not be performed on the the launch pad, Columbia will have to be rolled back to the huge Vehicle Assembly Building (VAB). The roll-back will happen sometime next week and the repair of the leak and the return to flight readiness status of Columbia could take about a month. Complicating the repair work is the planned launch of the shuttle Atlantis (STS-38) for mid-July. Since Atlantis is carrying a secret military payload, it has national security priority over the scientific mission of STS-35. NASA officials now are saying that it could be August before Columbia and the STS-35/SAREX mission can get off the ground.

STS-35 is planned to be an all scientific shuttle mission carrying the ASTRO-1 observatory in its cargo bay. Also flying aboard as a secondary experiment is the Shuttle Amateur Radio Experiment (SAREX) payload. The SAREX station consists of a packet radio ROBOT TNC, a 2 meter FM hand-held transceiver, and a Grid laptop computer to be operated by Payload Specialist, Ron Parise (WA4SIR). The special software written for this packet station will allow amateurs to receive a QSO number after they successfully connect with the station on packet. Also, the plan is for WA4SIR to conduct 2 meter FM voice QSOs with amateurs on the ground.

Please stay tuned to AMSAT Nets and for further updates on the STS-35/SAREX mission.

CQ Volunteer Examineers

If you are an accredited VE or hold an amateur extra class or advanced class license and can help give exams at FIT, please call Bill Newkirk, at 724-6183.

We want to find enough VEs to set up a schedule so everyone doesn't have to work every session. When the VE program was new, there was lots of interest in the program because it was new. Now, 5 years later, we know who the "regulars" are, but they have to work every session. Working on exams is rewarding work, but everyone needs a vacation from time to time.

We'll also be trying to track down those who were involved at the start of the FIT program, but don't wait for us to call.

Again, Sonny (NF4B) and I would like to hear from you if you are interested in administering radio examinations to the public.

Thanks, bill wb9ivr @ n4jlr

The **TARC Newsletter** is (usually) published on a monthly basis. Articles are published based on their newsworthiness to TARC membership, space available, and ease of entry to the publishing medium.

Preferred transfer methods are EMail to *Doug Reed* at Tech-Talk BBS, EMail on 2 meter packet to N4QVY@N4JLR or N4QVY@WD4HIM, direct packet, 3.5" AmigaDOS 880K disk, 3.5" MS-DOS 360K disk, 5.25" MS-DOS 360K disk, direct landline modem, and print / hand-written / hardcopy formats, in that order. Separate each paragraph with a blank line for ease of re-formatting into a publishing format.

Article / classified deadline is two Fridays prior to the date of the monthly meeting.

Articles may be given to the editor, Doug - N4QVY, at the IHOP on net nights, or left with Bob - WB4VQB, where it will hopefully make its way to the aforementioned editor.

The **TARC Newsletter** is assembled on a Commodore Amiga computer using Gold Disk's PageSetter desktop publishing software and output to a PostScript compatible laser printer. Bulk printing service is donated by Brevard Office Equipment, Inc. Folding, stamping, and mailing services will probably be done by myself, Bud, and whoever else we can talk into it. Thanks to all those involved in this maddening once (thank goodness) a month event.

Desk...

choice, become a VE, and give Bill a call. If there are enough VEs, we could possibly start rotating the exams around the county, such as Titusville one month, Cocoa the following, Melbourne the next, and then back to Titusville. It would definitely be more convenient to more people.

Les has asked that I tell everyone that he has tickets to the Melbourne Hamfest. He also has applications for tables down there, and if you want a table, you had better act now. They sell out quick!

Les would probably like for me to tell you about the repeater receiver antenna party we had last weekend at Daniel's tower. Many people showed up: Les, K4SJC (of course, even though he had had a 105 degree fever two

Field Day...

serving beef stew on Saturday evening, and his famous pancakes on Sunday morning. Sodas and snack foods will of course be provided at the operating positions.

The contest summary sheet for tallying up scores has a place to tell them the "number of participants." Look, just come on down, have some stew, or especially come by Sunday for pancakes, and THAT is participation. Any member of your family is invited to come along with you and be a participant too. The Hams might want to become ACTIVE participants by working a rig for a while, but that isn't that big a deal. Where we'll REALLY need the operators is on the night owl shift. I like to tell people to come on by after the bars close. A few of them even take me up on it. Talk in is, naturally, on 146.91 MHz.

Draa Field is the Football Stadium on the North side of town near the school bus terminal. We hope to see you there, whether or not you plan to operate the radios. Just come on down, hang out with the gang, and have a good time. If you have an hour or two to spare to rack up some points for the contest (or to show someone how to ham radio how it's done), that will be great too. See you there at 9 AM Saturday the 23rd for the antenna raising, or for dinner Saturday night, or possibly for breakfast Sunday morning. But by all means, please come visit with us. We'll be operating from 2 PM Saturday straight through to 2 PM Sunday. 73

More Desk...

days before), Archie, WN3DHI, and Dave, WB4SIG (the two tower climbers), Vern, KB4RBU, Morgan, K4GEA, Ozzie, N4SCY, Clyde, K4EOS, Bud, K4EOS, John Anderson, W4PRK (aka the 94 repeater man), and myself. The equipment and installation looks first rate, and everything went up with no real problems. Les took some home movies and Oz caught some good still shots.

See you at Field Day!

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CLUB DUES EXPIRE: JAN.91
GL 73 SEE YOU AT CLUB MEETING